1: Lowie E-5 (1926) 1939 NT20 Washo NT20

IV. MATERIAL CULTURE

Economic Life

Barrett has properly stressed the economic differences due to the contrast between a Sierra and a Basin habitat. The following fragmentary notes are corroboratory and supplementary.

Acorns (ma'lɔɣ) were associated with California, and even the Antelope Valley people did not live on them to any great degree. However, the Washo prepared a dish called mɛgi'"gɛla by mixing acorns and venison.

Pine nuts (t'a"gam) were gathered by men and women coöperatively, the husband knocking ripe ones off the trees with a big hooked pole and the wife gathering them. The women would pick them out, put them in a basket, and let them dry. When dried, the nuts could be kept for about a year; in the spring a pit was made for storage, in the winter they were taken out for consumption. The Washo made a pine-nut "soup," which was eaten with spoons. According to Bill, people went for pine nuts in September.

Along the Walker River the Washo constructed many "fish houses,"—a statement that extends their boundaries appreciably toward the east. Trout (a"t'abi) were speared with shafts about seven feet long. Fish were also taken by nets and clubbed to death. Sometimes fifteen were caught in a day. On Lake Tahoe, a group of Washo would go after fish in rafts (see below).

Antelope, deer (mendɛ"wi), and jack rabbits were hunted communally, the first-mentioned under the guidance of a dreamer (p. 324). Jack, possibly expressing a local difference, said that deer were hunted by only one or two men and only in the mountains. According to another statement, four or five hunters would mask themselves with deer heads in stalking the game. They would shake up dirt to determine the direction of the wind so as to forestall being scented, thus sneaking up to shooting range. A communal deer hunt was organized in September, when the deer were fat, but not every year. The leader, who did not derive his office from dreams, would say, "Get together, we'll try to kill a few deer." Then the men assembled on the day fixed, bringing their blankets since they were to camp out for about a week. Possibly as many as fifty Washo from Douglas County would travel afoot about thirty miles toward, say, twenty miles from McKinney, California. It took them two days, camping according to their leader's instructions. The next morning, he spoke to them. He remained in the middle, his followers dividing so as to form two arcs of a circle flanking him and finally connecting again. When they sighted deer, they killed up to ten or fifteen a day. The next day, they moved to another spot; and so on, for about a week, thus covering altogether many thousands of acres. At last they stopped and returned, carrying by means of tumplines loads almost too big for them. For deer no corrals were built.

The communal rabbit hunt was also purely secular. Barrett mentions a hereditary chief for rabbit hunting[*] and all other coöperative hunting and fishing operations. "He it was who notified the people of the arrival of the

[*] *Op. cit.*, 12.

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The physical environment of Washo territory is marked by its variety of terrain, climate, flora, and fauna, primarily due to variations in altitude within a comparatively small area. The Sierra Nevada rises gradually to the east of the central valley of California from near sea level to peaks over 10,000 feet in altitude, then it drops abruptly on the eastern slope to about 5,000 feet. Generally the Washo lived at 4,500 to 5,500 feet in the valleys east of the Sierra Nevada; around 5,500 to 7,500 in the highlands; and their treks took them down to 3,000 feet on the west side of the Sierra. This gave them a wide range of habitats in mountain-valley terrain.

The highlands and western slopes had yellow pine, fir, and hemlock vegetation; a transitional and boreal life zone; humid mesothermal and microthermal climates; and zones receiving between 10 to 60 inches of annual precipitation. In the mountains the summers are warm, with rains through July. Snows start in November, followed by cold weather with freezing nights until April.

In the lowlands to the east of the Sierra Nevada the Washo had pinon and juniper vegetation, an upper sonoran life zone, and an arid-cold-steppe climate (Elsasser 1960, 3-6). These areas have 100-140 days of growing season and all farming requires irrigation (Department of Economic Development n.d.). The weather station at Minden, Nevada is 4,730 feet above sea level. It has recorded an annual precipitation of 8.73 inches, an average growing season of 144 days from May 29 to September 20, a high maximum temperature of 109° F. and a low maximum of -24° F.

Throughout Washo territory the average variability of annual precipitation is around 20-25%. In the months of December through February 60-70% of possible sunshine is received and the figure is 80-90% in the months of June through August.

The mountains and lakes (especially Lake Tahoe), the high percentage of sunny days, and legalized gambling in Nevada make tourism the major industry in Washo territory today. Cattle raising and dairying are the most important agrarian industries. Lumbering and mining are of minor importance (Department of Economic Development n.d.).

Compared with other tribes in the Great Basin the Washo occupied a very abundant environment. Hamilton described the Truckee River country in 1844 as "a hunter's paradise, with the streams full of fish and blue grouse in every direction" (Sieber 1951, 162). This abundance is reflected in the fact that the Washo had a higher population density than any other Great Basin tribe. Kroeber (1947, 137) gives a figure for the Washo that comes out as 2.4 square miles per person. The average population density for all of the Great Basin was roughly 15 square miles per person (Steward 1938, 46).

CHAPTER II

ECONOMY

Compared to more technologically advanced societies, the Washo had little processing, storage, or transportation of goods. It was a "direct economy" in that the producing group consumed most of its own products. Distances between the point of distribution and the point of consumption were usually not great.

Economic demands seldom exceeded subsistence requirements so that even when natural supplies were abundant accumulated surpluses were small. Surpluses in pinenuts are an exception to this, but since pinenuts were difficult to store for more than one year or to tranport in profitable quantities, this surplus was set aside for subsistence and not trade. If one family had a surplus in pinenuts there was a tendency for all families to have such a surplus. Therefore these were largely non-tradeable surpluses.[1]

Supply was determined by the productivity of the natural environment and the amount and skill of the human labor used in production and distribution. The part of wealth devoted to acquiring new goods and the social forms involved in production, distribution, and consumption played a minor role in supply.

Pinenuts (tagum), acorns (malung), and other seeds were among the major staple foods. A variety of roots, berries, and leafy plants filled out the rest of the vegetable diet. Animal fats and protein were provided primarily by fish and small mammals, especially rabbits. With the exception of deer (mɨmdewi), the large mammals, such as antelope (ayas), mountain goat (ogul), and bear (tabe) were not important in the diet. They were sought as much for their skins and the prestige of killing them as for their meat. Downs (1961, 381) writes "all informants emphasized that Indians shared food equally. Thus a statement made voluntarily that bear meat was not shared suggests different attitudes about bears." And there are suggestions that "the killing of a bear represented the ultimate in Washo bravery and the possession of the skin conferred extra powers on the owner." Birds, reptiles, and insects were also eaten. Several hundred species of plants and animals were known and used by the Washo. Merriam (n.d.) collected names for over 200 plants and animals. Numerous plants were used as medicines (Train, et al. 1941; Murphey 1959).

Water (dime) was carried and stored in deer intestine bags and basketry water-jars. With the numerous streams and springs in Washo territory no place

1. See pp. 57-58 for a discussion of pinenut surpluses.

is more than a few miles from running water. The importance of bathing in Washo ritual life made access to water particularly important. Springs were considered choice wintering sites because the water never froze over.

Material Culture

The following outline gives the main items of Washo material production. Almost all of these items have separate terms in the Washo language. Most of the terminology not included may be found in the vocabularies by Merriam (1904 and 1904-1935) and Kroeber (1907). The author's field data are supplemented here primarily by the works of Dangberg (1919) and Stewart (1941).

A. Housing and related items.
1. Winter house of poles, branches, sod, etc. in a conical form (galis dangal. Plate V, A illustrates a galis dangal.
2. Windbreak of branches in a half-dome form (gadu), Plate V, B.
3. Shade of various forms (ta?a).
4. Hunting and fishing blinds (ma?angal).
5. Meat drying scaffold (bialt).
6. Bed (tada), seat (itkolanga), and mat (maba) of woven sagebrush bark.
7. Fireplace (diyu itgums¢w¢) and torch (ulu ushi).
8. Log footbridge (mogahat).
9. Log ladder (bakmanga).
10. Fish dam (imbeshuk).

B. Clothing and ornaments.
1. Blankets or robes of whole skins or woven from strips of rabbit skin (dayoliti and umbidu). (Plate IV, C).
2. Deer or antelope skin clothing.
   a. belt (melliu)
   b. breechclout (gumyoyabuwe)
   c. poncho (damu)
   d. skirt (tsilug¢l)
   e. dress (mangumtash)
   f. apron (imboshude)
   g. moccasins (moko)
   h. headband (ih¢pbey¢gul)
3. Leggings (p¢kishu wigas), woman's napkin, and baby diaper of sagebrush bark.
4. Hairnet of fiber cord (megodih¢p).
5. Round snowshoes (shumelli) with wood rim and bark or skin network.
6. Bracelet (m¢liuy¢k), necklace (uml¢suk), and ear pendant of bone, plant, or shell (madap) beads (makau).
7. Hafted and unhafted bone or stone drills.
8. Body paints of red (sawasan), yellow (waltsatsini), and white (dipek) in mineral pigments and charcoal for black (w¢lyauwi).
9. Feathers (tsisuapo), especially of magpie or eagle.
10. Scratching bone for tattoos.

1/ [see end plate V, following p. 74 -- Analyst]

CHAPTER III

DISTRIBUTION

John C. Fremont made several contacts with the Washo Indians in January and February of 1844. He described a custom that reveals the essence of Washo economic distribution (Nevins 1956, 345-352).

"A party of twelve Indians came down from the mountains to trade pinenuts, of which each carried a little bag. These seemed now to be staple of the country, and whenever we met an Indian, his friendly salutation consisted in offering a few nuts to eat and to trade..."

And later "...when we reached a little affluent to the river at the bottom we suddenly found ourselves in presence of eight or ten Indians...Our friendly demeanor reconciled them and when we got near enough they immediately stretched out to us handfuls of pinenuts, which seemed an exercise of hospitality."

Gifts, as Fremont experienced, were part of everyday social intercourse among the Washo. Gifts were given in connection with births, puberty ceremonies, marriages, and deaths. As Fremont indicates, gifts also served to establish contact with strangers and to initiate trade.

In the quantitative terms of distributing total Washo production of goods and services, gift exchange was not very important. It was in the sphere of ideal values that gift exchange became important.

The value of sharing and of giving found expression in most of Washo economic distributions. Sharing (mib¢shigihi) obtained at every level of Washo social organization. Sharing also decreased as kinship and residence distances increased. Non-Washo received the least of Washo sharing and yet Fremont and his party, although total strangers, were met with gifts and the invitation to trade. The person who would not share with others of the same household, or who was generally stingy (hut¢ tiki) would not be included in the networks of sharing and might be "talked out" of his household.

With various qualities of the transactions as our criteria, eight forms of economic distribution stand out in Washo society. These eight forms can be analysed in terms of the extent of "primary" and "secondary" social relations involved in each. Primary refers to relations between people with common goals and relations that are ends in themselves, intrinsically valued, "personal" in that the identity of the individuals cannot be changed without disturbing the relationship, "inclusive" in that the range or involvement

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of the relationship is wide, and "spontaneous" in being relatively uninhibited (Davis 1949). Secondary relations are at the other end of the continuum: extrinsic, impersonal, exclusive, and inhibited.

The eight forms of economic distribution as they occur in Washo society can be ordered along this continuum from primary to secondary: (1) ceremonial disposal, (2) familial sharing, (3) task group sharing, (4) gift and ceremonial exchange, (5) feasts, (6) payment for services, (7) gambling, and (8) trade.

In terms of the socio-economic groups involved, only two - familial sharing and task group sharing - are essentially concerned with economic production. The other six are concerned with distribution. This gives us the dichotomy of "producing groups" and "distributing groups". The distribution involved in producing groups takes the general form of sharing (weak reciprocity), while the distribution in distributing groups takes the general form of an exchange (strong reciprocity).

On the basis of a hypothetical breakdown of the total distribution of all economic goods and services in Washo economy we can order these forms on a continuum from the quantitatively most important to the least important: (1) familial sharing, (2) task group sharing, (3) gift and ceremonial exchange, (4) feasts, (5) gambling, (6) trade, (7) payment for services, and (8) ceremonial disposal. Other forms of distribution such as theft (lamamshawi, "thief"), lost (pa) and found (ipu), and the spoils of war did occur but were not important enough to be discussed here.

The following outline presents a few of the qualities of these eight forms of distribution as they appear in Washo society and in the order they will be discussed in the following section of this chapter.

"Primary" Distribution

1. Familial Sharing: based on division of labor by sex and age in the household; quantitatively most important. [462] [592]
2. Task Group Sharing: based on the breakdown of products from producing groups larger than the household.
3. Gift and Ceremonial Exchange: strong reciprocity: social status primary; connected with hospitality and life cycle events. [554]
4. Feasts: an abundance of food distributed by kin, task, or communal group. [574]
5. Ceremonial Disposal: based on supernatural beliefs.

"Secondary" Distribution

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[525]
[434]

6. Gambling: economic competition via games of chance and skill.

7. Trade: immediate reciprocation and explicit negotiation.

8. Payment for Services: dispensing of "secondary" socio-economic debts.

Familial Sharing

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Familial sharing is characterized by distributions resulting from the division of labor by sex and age. This system accounted for roughly 70%-90% of all Washo economic distribution. The importance of the various channels for the flow of goods fluctuated seasonally and regionally, but the internal family system always predominated. Familial sharing pertained to relations in the household but was extended as a general value to include all of humanity. With the exception of gambling, trade, and some payment for services, all the major distribution systems in Washo economy appear to be derived from familial sharing. That is, they appear as extensions of the primary relations found foremost in the family.

Familial sharing is not considered an exchange in the economic sense because of the special character of the reciprocity. It has the quality of the true gift. That is, the return of an economic good or service is not required. Children, for example, may never be in a position to repay their parents with economic goods. The case wherein the producer consumes his own production immediately without actually pooling or sharing is here included under familial sharing.

Reciprocation may come in non-economic forms such as the attribution of status or religious services. In familial sharing there is often no reciprocation from others at all. The sharing may be in the form of a cultural prescription, unreasonable for an "economic man", but nevertheless done: a ritual, conservative, habitual form.

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Since familial sharing was so important, we should understand something of the household or domestic unit, particularly its composition, relations with other households, and its annual round of activities. A reconstruction of the composition of fifteen households in existence between 1885 and 1900 showed a range in number of individuals from three to thirteen and a mean number of seven individuals.[1] The household usually consisted of a core family

1. This research is summarized on pp. 8-10.

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of a man, his wife and children, plus a few other close relatives such as brothers, sisters, and parents of either the man or the wife. Occasionally an unrelated friend was also part of the household.

The household composition changed over time by adding in-laws and children, by losing children who married and moved elsewhere, and by deaths. Yet each household had a degree of permanence as an economic unit.

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In the cold half of the year, roughly October through March, the people of the household lived together in the winter house (galis dangal). Communities (angale atega) consisted of from two to about seven galis dangal scattered about fifty feet to a hundred yards from each other. These small communities were located around every permanent spring in the Pine Nut Hills and at other springs at low elevations and along the Truckee, Carson, and Walker rivers, at Washoe Lake, and at Long Valley Creek.

The Washo generally moved into the mountains in the warm months to fish the streams, particularly around Lake Tahoe, to hunt, and to gather the highland plants. During this time communities of scattered windbreaks (gadu) sprang up along the streams. It is not clear to this writer to what extent the winter "communities" persisted into the summer. However, it is clear that the "territorial divisions" maintained a degree of exclusiveness from one season to the next. The members of each household continued to live and work together and the households were much more mobile than in the cold months. They shifted residence in warm weather several times, rarely staying at the same site for over a month.

If the pinenut crop was to be good the household would move to the Pine Nut Hills around the middle of September. After collecting pinenuts many people would go, as single households or larger trek groups, to the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada for the later maturing acorns in October. They would try to gather the acorns and pack them back to the east side of the Sierras before the snows began. The total time for the trek was about two or three weeks. Occasionally they would winter west of the crest of the Sierras and build galis dangal there.

If the pinenut crop was to be bad they might stay longer at the highland rivers and then go directly for acorns. If both the pinenut and acorn crops were poor a few households might stay in the mountains depending more on fish and game for subsistence. Wintering around Lake Tahoe was enhanced by the fact that this deep lake does not freeze over in cold weather.

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Familial sharing among the Washo was based on the differences of sex and age in a group committed to cooperative survival. The division of labor

involved in production was partially lost in distribution because of the communal pooling for use purposes of food, clothing, and shelter. That pooling was not complete is evidenced in the fact that all products made by a deceased person were destroyed. Also clothing and implements were personal belongings and individually owned to a considerable degree.

The older people were the major authority figures as long as they were economically influential. With skill and experience they led their households and communities in every phase of life. However, older people who became an extreme burden on the household because of blindness or other disabilities were deserted and left to die. There are indications that this desertion was met with resignation on the part of the old person and with grief by the family, but was deemed inevitable. A corollary to this was the belief that persons acquired often dangerous supernatural powers with age (cf., Freed and Freed n.d.). Thus, well intentioned gifts from grandparents to grandchildren may be inadvertently harmful.

Generally everyone ate at the same time with the major meal often in the late afternoon. Producing men ate the most and producing women came next. Non-producing old people and children were resented for their supposedly great appetites and in practice probably ate much less than the others. Old people and children were often given the boiling stones and stirring sticks to lick off the cooked meal. Dangberg (n.d., 30) indicates that children were often fed rabbit brains, which adults did not prefer. Mothers prechewed solid foods for infants.

Familial sharing was extended beyond the household primarily through hospitality to visitors. In times of hunger whole households without food might move in with relatives or even unrelated neighbors. In this case private property such as cooking utensils were not pooled, but the food was shared. The two groups living together would cook separately. The guests would be expected to gather wood, bring in water, go hunting, and make what contribution they could.

There were starvation (bisha basha) times, particularly in the late winter, when the household would hide its food, even from relatives. Hank Pete said he heard of starving people who would tear apart their rabbit skin robes to chew the fat off the hides and divide a chipmunk between a whole family. It is said that people could go for ten to fifteen days without eating. Women would give their portions to the men and children because it was believed the women could go longer without eating. A different inventory of foods was used that would never be eaten in ordinary times.

Task Group Sharing[1]

Task group sharing among the Washo occurred in connection with the breakdown of products that resulted from efforts of hunting, fishing, and gathering parties that were larger that the household. The division of goods in this case was not necessarily in proportion to the amount of work contributed. Often mere presence with the party was sufficient to receive an equal share. Goods were usually divided equally among all the adult members of the task group. The meat of a single deer shot by a party of hunters was divided equally regardless of whose arrow actually brought the deer down. No information is available on how the hide and head were divided. In view of Washo techniques of clothing manufacture we would think that it would not be cut up, but given whole to one man. The Kawaiisu gave it to the hunter whose arrow brought the deer down (Cappannari 1960).

Slight variations were present in some divisions of the products depending on such things as ownership of a rabbit net or shamanistic powers in antelope drives. Rabbits (p¢ileu) were killed by individuals for meat anytime of the year, but winter communal drives (p¢ileu ush¢¢sh) provided most of the skins used in blankets and a great deal of meat. In winter the furs were in their prime. Also the diverse fishing and gathering activities of the summer were over so that people had spare time on their hands.

Rabbit nets (p¢ileu digush) were woven of plant fibers. These nets were about four feet high and usually from 20 to 40 feet in length. The nets were repaired and gradually added to in length over the years. Fremont wrote that "These nets were, perhaps, 30 to 40 feet long kept upright in the ground by slight sticks at intervals, and were made from a kind of wild hemp, very much resembling in manufacture those common among the Indians of the Sacramento Valley." (Nevins 1956, 355). Barrett (1917, 11) said that the rabbit nets were reported to be like those used by the Paviotso and usually some 300 feet long. The present writer's informants said that individually owned nets were tied together during a drive to form a single net 300 feet long. The combined nets were strung out across the floor of a valley or along the side of a hill. As the rabbit drivers moved across the country they shot rabbits with their bows and arrows and pulled them out of holes by forcing sticks down and twisting the stick into the rabbit fur. Plate IV, A illustrates a rabbit drive.

The people who owned the nets with some of their family would club, strangle, or crush the temples of the rabbits that got tangled in the nets. Each day for three or four days the nets were set up and a drive was held in

1. This writer is indebted to Anastasio (n.d.) for the term and concept of the "task group" as it is found in the Basin-Plateau area.

[see cat. 116, end plate IV, following p. 74 -- Analyst]

a new area. In effect the net owner would receive a number of rabbits in proportion to the length of his net because he and his household would collect the rabbits that came into his net, a section of the combined nets. The drivers would receive only those rabbits they killed before they reached the nets, but the drivers usually belonged to a household that had a net. These drives are reported to have brought in thousands of rabbits.

Antelope drives were organized by a shaman leader who received more of the meat than the drivers because of his special service in charming the animals. Drives for ducklings and mud hens sometimes involved two or three households and the catch was always divided equally. Duckling drives are apparently the only times when tule boats were used. Washoe Lake was the major place for duckling drives.

Fishing activities were organized on a small scale. Most fish were taken by spearing, often from fish blinds built over a section of the stream. One method was to divert small streams (dum¢¢sh) and pick up the stranded fish. Another method used a basketry fish trap anchored in a narrow spot on a stream.

In addition there were fish drives using dams (imbeshuk)[1] or fish nets (atabi digush). The drives usually involved only a single household, but occasionally individuals from more than one household would work together in driving the fish, often with a large bundle of willow branches (b¢l¢shi) that was pushed along (Freed n.d.). The work of diverting a stream often involved members of more than one household, but in any case the division of products was approximately equal according to the number of adult workers. Men did most of the fishing, but there was no opposition to women fishing as there was to women hunting. Downs (1961, 381) said "Fishing appears to be far less subject to ritualization among the Washo than was hunting."

Pinenut gathering was organized to some degree on a tribal wide basis. There were traditional gathering strips for the various households. Prayers and ritual were given for the whole pinenut crop before gathering began at the fall pinenut festival (tagum gumsabay?). Distribution of the pinenut crop depended primarily on the amount of work put in, while location of a household's gathering strips (dimasha) was of only minor importance.

Gift and Ceremonial Exchange

Gift and ceremonial exchange was characterized by being personal, friendly, and by increasing in volume with the intensity of social ties. The reciprocity

1. Fremont saw these in January of 1844 among the Northern Paiute and Washo (Nevins 1956, 343).

If no young or old people were around to receive them, the heart and liver of a deer, antelope, or rabbit were thrown away. The fetus of an animal and the eggs of scavenger birds were never eaten. Coyote, lizard, snake, frog, and eagle meat were also taboo. When a person died all of his personal belongings were abandoned or destroyed. The home of the deceased was torn down or burned. Food produced by the deceased was destroyed or traded off for other food. One informant said that even clothes made by the deceased and given to another person were often destroyed.

Downs (1961, 375) wrote that, "Few, if any, Washo activities do not contain an element which we can describe as religious, supernatural, or magical." The present writer has a similar impression, but it is difficult to attempt a reconstruction of the role of religion in economy since the data on this subject are so fragmentary today. Economic distribution related to the supernatural, such as the instances of ceremonial disposal described above, appears to be the most intimate, "primary" form of distribution. The importance of the supernatural side of the Washo world view is seen in the mythology collections by Dangberg (1927) and Lowie (1939).

Gambling

Gambling (gawa) provided the most competitive basis for exchange among the Washo. It was more competitive than trade and was antithetical to the ideal of sharing. Teams that gambled and won together divided the winnings, but the competition between teams was intense and not necessarily proportionate to the value of the objects wagered.

The Washo would bet on any game or competition. Foot races (gumlɨ¢sh¢¢sh) for four, five, or six miles were a favorite subject of wagers. Bets were made on the outcome of the men's football game or the women's stick and rope game. Usually the players themselves would bet. Archery, a ring and pin game, a rock-toss game (umlalate), a quoit game, and wrestling were all the subjects of betting. Sometimes the wager would involve only a hit on the head or hand, but often the stakes would get high, requiring payment of baskets, eagle tail feathers, jewelry, buckskins, or even a rabbit skin blanket.

The favorite gambling games were those involving the manipulation of small sticks or bones, the hand games (hinaya when played by women and hinayaugi when played by men), stick games (sigaya), dice games, and basket games. These games were often major social events in themselves involving teams of players and dozens of spectators. The men and women always played separately. The games also involved chants, foot stamping, and other tactics to throw the opposing team off. Today men and women gamble together and the hand games have been replaced by card games.

Trade

Trade and gift exchange were not clearly separate in Washo society. However, the language does distinguish between sharing (mibʔshigihi) and trading (damalu).[1] In trade there tended to be immediate reciprocation while gift exchange often involved a time lapse. Trade also tended to be competitive and to increase with less intensive social ties. Trade involved explicit negotiation and social status was secondary as a factor in the transaction. Trade involved an impersonal relation which focused on the economic goods rather than upon the social relations of persons involved.

Washo trade was an estimated one or two percent of the total distribution. Four types of trade are recognized: (1) silent, without face-to-face interaction; (2) personal, where personal ties are relatively important; (3) administered, based on governmental rules; and (4) market, which is relatively free from personal and governmental ties. Washo trade in this framework was "personal".

Hank Pete maintained that women would often trade under circumstances in which men would ordinarily give gifts. Trade proceeded with little haggling. The transaction was initiated by either a buyer or a seller. It took the form of propositions, questions, and answers such as "I'll trade you this for that. This one? No, that one! I need more for that one. Then I'll include this, too. We can trade then." Trade with non-Washo was conducted through gestures and a few key words understood by both parties, such as damalu for "trade".

The Washo lacked rigid standards of reference, that is, the valuation of two materials to be traded in terms of a third material. Goods were traded without reference to their value in other goods and without a traditional exchange rate. For this reason it was difficult to collect data on equivalencies of value or rates of exchange.

From descriptions of actual transactions, and by insisting on some relative values of objects, the following scale was established by this writer. Hank Pete said that rabbit nets were never traded. They were too valuable. Many things, because of tradition or personal desires, were not traded. Such things might be a shaman's paraphernalia, a bow that had killed a number of deer, or food and clothing needed for survival. Freed and Freed (n.d., 10) state that the loss or destruction of a shaman's curing implements was a cause of illness to the shaman.

Certain things were near the top of the value scale. A double rabbit skin blanket, a large coiled water tight cooking basket (giuleu), a whole buck deer, and three tanned deer skins were roughly equal in value. Hank Pete said he had never heard of anyone who had three tanned deer skins, and a

1. A loan word from Miwok, according to William H. Jacobsen, Jr. (personal communication).

The Washo lacked well tailored clothing necessary for extensive winter travel. Their techniques of production were geared to small scale household use so that tradeable surpluses were rarely acquired. The Washo were organized into small scale groupings with few specilizations of labor. They lacked adequate storage techniques for fish and game so that surpluses in these foods were not preserved. Also inter-tribal frictions and hatreds often prevented safe travel outside of Washo territory. There are indications that once the Whites established an effective government over Washo and surrounding territory, trade and marriage between Indians from different tribes increased significantly. The Carson Indian Boarding School, established in 1890, became an important factor in developing intertribal cooperation by providing a situation in which individuals from several tribes could meet and become friends.

Certain kinds of goods were particularly heavy in the trade traffic of aboriginal Great Basin and California. Davis (1961, 12-4) gives an idea of what these items were in California. In order of importance they were marine shells and beads, salt, basketry, hides and pelts, bows, acorns, fish, pinenuts, obsidian, pigments, miscellaneous vegetal foods, rabbit skin blankets, arrows, and a number of less important items.

In one table Davis (ibid., pp. 12-4) lists 83 traded items. The Washo used 53 of these items. Except for five items made of marine shells and "Caucasian goods", all 53 of the items used by the Washo were gathered or made by the Washo.

Pacific coast beads and pendants were used for personal adornment, but they were unimportant in face of the competition with local shell, plant, bone, and stone materials.

It is probable that all of the 53 items in the list by Davis were occasionally received by Washo from non-Washo through trade. Even items that were abundant within Washo territory such as pinenuts, fish, basketry, and rabbit skin blankets may have been received by trade in special instances. Lists of things traded are of little value unless they reflect volume.

The goods most exported to the Miwok and Maidu were salt, pinenuts, obsidian, skins, and several Washo manufactures such as rabbit skin blankets and basketry. In return the Washo received principally acorns, soaproot for combs and brushes, a variety of medicinal plants, and occasionally manufactures such as baskets and yew bows. Few acorns were received by the Washo through trade unless the local crop was poor. All the other plants traded were received primarily through gathering and not trade.

Both Davis (1961) and Sample (1950), in their summaries of California trade, repeated a view held by Barrett and Gifford (1933, 193, 221). It is

CHAPTER IV

THE WASHO CASE IN ECONOMIC THEORY

The Washo had no money, marketplaces, trade for profit, accumulation of capital, or inheritance as these relations are defined in standard economic parlance. Little trade was present, either among Washo or between Washo and non-Washo peoples. Goods and services did not move through profit-incentive, or for capital reserves and the accumulation of prestige goods. Goods did move, however, through the incentives of subsistence, fulfillment of ritual obligations, and the maintenance of social approval.

The following sections address certain theoretical problems in economic anthropology: non-market mechanisms of exchange, political power and the economy, barriers to economic development, prestige economy and money, and overproduction.

Non-market Mechanisms of Exchange

A market is a price setting mechanism in the form of a sociocultural institution of economic exchange. A market inovlves exchange at bargained rates according to supply and demand. Generally Washo society would be described as having a "non-market" economy because it did not have marketplaces (a physical place where people customarily come to exchange), prices were not "set", and the value of goods or a service was not usually determined by what other goods or services they could be exchanged for.

Only in the distribution forms we have described as involving secondary social relations (gambling, trade, and payment for services) do we find anything analogous to market institutions. In Washo society the exchange or market value was usually overshadowed by personal, social, religious, or biological survival values. It is essential to include these non-market values in any equation that attempts to describe the regularities of Washo economics.

Few demands were set by the culture for economic goods. When these demands were filled individuals ceased working. There was no significant accumulation of property beyond immediate needs. Hoarding was impossible due to the requirement of sharing with relatives and friends. There was a constant social lien on the production of individuals and little social advantage to be gained by accumulating goods. The most renowned Washo among his own people in historic times, Gumalanga, behaved and dressed as the poorest among them. Gumalanga expressed the egalitarian orientation of Washo social values.

The eight forms of economic distribution discussed in Chapter III were the major mechanisms of distribution in Washo society. To varying degrees

these mechanisms may be found in other economies in the world along the continuum of technological complexity.

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Political Authority and the Economy

Sahlins (1960, 408) writes that "In primitive economies, most production is geared to use of the producers or to discharge of kinship obligations, rather than exchange or gain...control of the means of production is decentralized, local, and familial...economic relations of coercion and exploitation and the corresponding social relations of dependence and mastery are not created in the system of production...in the absence of the incentive given by exchange of the product against a great quantity of goods on a market, there is a tendency to limit production to goods that can be directly utilized by the producers." These statements fit the Washo case and help to explain why the investment of political authority and the possession of wealth are not associated in Washo society.

The ability to produce economic goods, and personal generosity, were two of the most respected qualities in individuals. Men who had these qualities were often given a degree of political authority. That is, their advice was respected and followed. In the broad view, political authority was the result of conformance to a configuration of obligations: economic, religious, kinship, etc.

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Sociopolitical Groups and the Economy

Steward (1938, 257-262) presents a theory for the development of sociopolitical groups in the Basin-Plateau area. In his view these groups were conditioned by their varying ecological adjustments.

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"The subsistence habits required in each region determined the size, nature, and permanency of population aggregates. These, in turn, predetermined many, though not all, features of social structures and political controls. In some regions, as among Western Shoshoni, exigencies of existence permitted little variation in the general sociopolitical patterns. When, however, ecology allowed latitude in subsistence activities, noneconomic factors, such as warfare, festivals, ceremonies, etc., became determinants of the sociopolitical patterns."

"Among the Western Shoshoni and many of their Northern Paiute and Southern Paiute neighbors it was physically impossible for families either to remain in one place for any considerable time or for more than a few families to remain in permanent association. The outstanding sociopolitical units,

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consequently, were the biological family and the small winter village, consisting of a loose aggregate of families...Because...of the erratic occurrence of wild seeds and the frequent variation of terrain covered, alliance did not always bring together the same families or village members. Habitual cooperation of the same people and therefore the development of fixed if limited political allegiances and controls was impossible. Likewise, habitual and exclusive utilization of particular territories by certain groups could not develop...Though kinship ties were important, the uncertainties of residence and of assured association with specific relatives prevented the development of an elaborate and nicely fixed set of kinship duties and obligations..."

Also ecology "permitted, if it did not cause, band development" in Owens Valley and "in late pre-Caucasian times among the Northern Shoshoni and probably the Ute."

The present writer has tried to show that "warfare, festivals, ceremonies, etc." should not be called "noneconomic", although they may be predominantly something other than economic. All groupings have some economic dimensions. However, Steward's point is well taken. He implies that as the natural abundance of food increased or the techniques of exploitation and transportation improved the nature of groupings became less determined by the search for food.

This present writer accepts the major outlines of Steward's theory, but must add that it was not entirely true for the Washo. The Washo had one of the more productive natural environments in the Great Basin and this was reflected in their being closer in form of sociopolitical groupings to the Owens Valley Paiute than the Western Shoshoni. However, when we compare seasonal variations of aboriginal social organization it is clear that predominantly economic activities determined the nature of groupings in the abundant summer as well as the meager winter.

Also Washo sociopolitical groupings were not radically altered by the comparatively abundant food made available by Whites. There is support for the idea that the cultural traditions behind sociopolitical grouping have some degree of internal dynamics and resistence to change, apart from economic changes, in the facts of Washo acculturation.

Barriers to Economic Development

The Washo lived in an area of abundance for a hunting, fishing, and gathering economy. They used this abundance to an advantage and, for a Great Basin tribe, had a dense population. Still they were surprisingly low in economic development. Kroeber (1939, 137) ranked the Washo on the

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lowest level of a seven point scale of culture for native North America.

Trade, warfare, and communication provide the avenues for cultural diffusion. 433
If these avenues of communication lead to technologically advanced cultures, 439
we can expect economic development even if custom is sanctified and the 177
force of tradition is great. The greatest barrier to Washo economic development seems to have been their isolated territorial location. They were isolated from the surrounding high cultures in the Southwest, California, and the Northwest Coast. Barriers to trade were discussed above (pp. 50-51): mountain [133]
terrain, language differences, climatic extremes, lack of significant tradeable [628]
surpluses, location of sufficient resources within Washo territory, and inter-tribal hatreds. These barriers to trade were also barriers to economic development in that lines of diffusion remained weak.

Washo society was neither inventively productive nor absorptive. It does 433
not appear to represent a focal point for the development of any new and 178
more efficient solutions to the problems of survival. It appears rather, to have developed from big game hunting to a slightly more efficient base of [177]
hunting, fishing, and gathering. This development may have derived from the influence of Shoshoneans. More efficient techniques of gathering and storing fish might have raised their economy to the level of most Californians. Even in historic times the Washo have been slow in adopting agriculture and animal husbandry.

Manning Nash (Adams, et al, n.d., 23) suggested that the household was 433
not a very viable unit for economic expansion "because it is such a multi- 592
functional unit." Unlike the modern business firm, the household has many non-economic functions which conflict with its economic functions. This multifunctional character was present in all Washo socioeconomic groups.

The fact that the Washo did survive in their environment with a simple 433
technology attests to the culture's efficiency and viability. We simply raise the question of why they did not develop a more advanced economy and suggest that the kind of economy they had, with little inter-tribal trade and an orientation to the household, was a barrier to this development.

Prestige Economy and Money

The concept of a "prestige economy" came into use after DuBois (1936, 50) 433
defined the economic involvement in acquiring prestige among the Tolowa- 554
Tututni. She defined prestige economy as "a series of social prerogatives

and status values" as opposed to the subsistence economy which is "the exploitation of the plentiful natural resources available to any industrious individual." Among the Washo material goods flow almost indiscriminately in promoting subsistence and prestige. Washo social prerogatives and status values are intimately intertwined with the exploitation of natural resources.

Cappannari (1960, 140) wrote that "DuBois...makes clear that the 'monies' (that is, dentalia, woodpecker scalps, obsidian blades, and so on) of the Tolowa-Tututni served as a medium of exchange primarily in the prestige economy rather that the subsistence economy. The same applies to the 'monies' of the Shoshoneans." Money in this sense is a counter of prestige, usually items of highly congealed value in the world of social ritual, but not fully explained in terms of food, shelter, or defense. Prestige money is found among the Washo in the case of eagle feathers and fine woven baskets. These have congealed values for purposes of social ritual. They are also more significant in the context of social ritual than in the context of economic actuality, although ritual and economics coincide at many points.

Money is defined by Driver and Massey (1957, 382) as "material which possesses homogeneity, portability, divisibility, durability, and which serves as a medium of exchange, as a store of value, and as a standard of deferred payments." Pinenuts came the closest to being used as a "money" in Washo economy except that pinenuts were not very durable and lacked the compactness to serve as a concentrated store of value. Salt, eagle tail feathers, baskets, and skins were more concentrated in value. The Washo had no regular medium of exchange and no standard of deferred payments. In the definition used here they had no money. Three terms are now used to refer to wealth; bilada is U. S. currency, gidatwadota is a person's belongings, and m¢mgiwa is the wealth a person has with which to gamble or "a bet."

Overproduction

In Washo society some economic products were never distributed. This "problem of surplus" existed, in a society where starvation was well known, because storage and transportation were inadequate and trade was poorly developed.

An example is the overproduction of pinenuts. In years with abundant pinenuts, more was gathered than would actually be consumed. Since some nuts would be preserved into the next year this was a stored margin of safety in case the next year's crop was low. If pinenuts were again abundant, the remainder of the old crop that was not consumed was left to rot and the new nuts were gathered. Actually, any single grove of pinon trees will not

bear nuts two years in succession because pine trees have a biannual sexual maturity cycle, but different groves in different parts of the territory might combine to provide a crop each year if precipitation is sufficient. 433 222

Pinenuts were gathered in strips (dimasha) about one-third to one-half of a mile wide that ran up the hill following the natural contours. These strips were marked off by lines of stones (Lowie 1939, 303; Freed n.d., 10). Since the pinenuts ripened first at the lower elevations the gathering began at the bottom of the hill in September with the last prime nuts being gathered at higher elevations around the middle of October. Although gathering might go on for several weeks the actual collection time of prime nuts was about three weeks.

As the gathering party moved up the hill about three or four large brush and pineneedle covered caches of cones with the nuts still in them were built up the side of the hill. The caches ranged widely in size, but from descriptions it is possible to estimate an average size. A cache with its protective covering was about fifteen feet long, six feet wide, and four feet high. See Plate II, B for a view of a pinenut cache. Each household usually had rights in two or three strips but in abundant years might only collect from one strip. This would give each household about four caches each with from three to six hundred pounds of pinenuts, or about three hundred pounds per person. 433 222 251

In addition to the nuts cached in cones, a few hundred pounds of nuts in the shells would be gathered and eaten right away or cached in stone and grass lined pits (damyeo). Dry pineneedles were mixed with the nuts to keep them from getting damp and mouldy. At a rate of about a pound of nuts per person a day this gave the household enough pinenuts for roughly one half of their total food consumption for two years.[1]

Unfortunately Washo storage techniques were insufficient to protect the caches much beyond a year so large portions were lost to rot and animals. Also there may be a good pinenut crop the next year so that last year's surplus was not used. These factors resulted in an overproduction of about one-half of the crop that was non-tradeable.

Summary of Washo Economy

The aboriginal Washo Indians of California and Nevada subsisted on the products of hunting, fishing, and gathering. The staples of their diet were pinenuts, acorns, and other seeds, roots, and berries; small mammals; and fish. Deer provided some meat and most of the skins used in clothing. 262 [291]

1. Fremont wrote "at certain seasons they have fish...for the remainder of the year they live upon the pinenuts, which form their great winter subsistence... At present they were presented to us as a whole people living on this simple vegetable" (Nevins 1956, 353). [262]

1 [see cat. 116, and plate II, following p. 74 -- Analyst]

Rabbit skins were also cut into strips and woven into warm robes. Conical houses were made of wooden poles and brush thatch for winter weather while a half-dome windbreak served for warm weather.

The household of a family and relatives in a single winter house was the basic socioeconomic unit of society. Each household worked and shared together in solving the problems of survival and fulfilling social and ritual obligations. The household continued to fish, hunt, and collect its food in a fairly uniform way year after year in the same sector of Washo territory. If the fishing was poor in one place, they moved to another stream. If the pinenuts failed, they went to the west and gathered acorns. And wherever they went, they hunted or gathered what was available: some tree grubs here, a lettuce-like vegetable there, and a squirrel or rabbit or bird at the next place. The procurement and preparation of food was clearly the most time consuming activity in Washo life.

Men and women often worked together at the same tasks, but there was some division of labor by sex. Men hunted and except for basketry, were the craftsmen who made the clothing, houses, and hunting and fishing gear. Women gathered plant and insect foods, prepared and cooked them, made the baskets, and tended the children. A few individuals specialized to a degree in becoming shamans, midwives, herbalists, or particularly adept in a craft.

Sharing, as the economic basis of family life, was the very essence of Washo economy. Sharing found expression in the producing task groups that drew members from more than one household. It was through sharing that the vast majority of goods changed hands. Exchange, with a stronger demand for reciprocal equivalence than sharing, characterized the economic aspects of social rituals, as well as the more impersonal forms of distribution such as gambling, trade, and payments made for services rendered.

Washo economy appears in a few ways to be distinctive in the Great Basin. The Washo ranged a particularly productive environment which allowed them the highest population density in the Basin. The Washo may have had less trade than the surrounding peoples because of several factors, language isolation being one. Pinenut groves were privately owned, a rare phenomenon in the Basin. Washo techniques for gathering and storing pinenuts, in strips and the construction of great caches, is also perhaps unique in the Basin and inadvertantly presented them with another unique phenomenon, overproduction.

There are still broad gaps in our knowledge of Washo aboriginal life. The data are fairly complete on language and mythology, but the rest of Washo culture has been only sketched out in its major outlines. Most of this is unrecoverable and only by careful interviewing, archeology, and scrutiny of historical documents can we hope to reconstruct a way of life that began to disappear over 100 years ago.

?:Freed E-5 (1952-1957)1960 NT20 Washo NT20

[P. 350, A]

I. THE WASHO INDIANS

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This chapter is a brief summary of what is known of aboriginal Washo culture, except for social organization, together with the principal changes it has undergone since the coming of the whites. The most significant characteristic of Washo acculturation from the point of view of this study has been the progressive individualization of the society. This can be seen most clearly in their economic life, where the old, cooperative methods of earning a livelihood have given way to individual wage work. The trend toward individualism has also affected ceremonial. The major ceremony of the year, the pine-nut dance, has been given up; and curing is less a group affair than it once was, with the exception of the peyotists, who constitute approximately ten per cent of the tribal membership. Warfare, another activity requiring group cooperation, was abandoned shortly after the coming of the whites. The effects upon social organization of this trend toward individualism will be traced in the following chapters.

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[433]
[464]
[535]
[795]
[726]

INFORMANTS

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The sketch of Washo culture which follows is based primarily upon the sources listed below and upon data which I gathered directly in the field. My principal informants were the following: Nancy Emm, Clara Frank, Bertha Holbrook, and Hank Pete, all of Dresslerville, Nevada; Roy James, Woodfords, California; Caesar John, Markleeville, California; and Henry Rupert, Carson City, Nevada.

SOURCES

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Ethnographic accounts of the Washo are few. The principal ones are by Barrett (1917), Curtis (1926), and Lowie (1939). Stewart (1944) and Siskin (MS) have contributed two excellent studies of Washo peyotism, and Kroeber (1907) has published a brief sketch of the Washo language, which contains a list of kinship terms. Other major sources are Dangberg's (1927) collection of myths, Kroeber's (1925) brief summary of the then available data on Washo culture, Stewart's (1941) list of cultural elements, and Heizer and Elsasser's (1953) study of the archaeology of the central Sierra Nevada.

LOCATION

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The Washo Indians are a small, isolated group who speak a language tentatively placed in the Hokan stock (Sapir, 1929, p. 139). In aboriginal times they occupied the extreme western edge of Nevada and eastern California. The eastern part of their territory lay in the Great Basin and the western part in the Sierra Nevada. Aboriginal Washo territory extended from Honey Lake in the north to Sonora Pass in the south. The eastern boundary ran from Sonora Pass northward along the crest of the Pine Nut Mountains; it then turned west

8: Merriam& d'Azevedo E-4, 5 (1954-1955) 1957
NT20 Washo NT20

Washo Peyote Songs

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I

The Washo

THE Washo people of Nevada and California have been described linguistically as a small Hokan-speaking group among the Shoshonean-speaking peoples of the Great Basin (Kroeber 1907; Lowie 1939). They formerly inhabited a relatively abundant territory extending from Honey Lake in the north to Antelope Valley and Sonora Pass in the south, and from the Pinenut Range east of Carson Valley in Nevada to Lake Tahoe and the summit of the Sierra-Nevada Mountains of California in the west. Present population is variously reported at between 400 and 1000 individuals; the figures on file at the Nevada Indian Agency in Stewart, Nevada, support the larger estimates. The Washo were formerly distributed in small, band-like communities composed of semi-exogamous extended families which made use of the full range of their diversified setting in hunting and gathering, and were thus a highly mobile population. In recent times, however, there has been an increasing tendency to cluster in small colonies in or near the older white settlements of Nevada and California, and on the few remaining allotment acres provided by the government many years ago. The major source of money-income for families is provided by those members who are employed as laborers on road-construction gangs, ranches, and farms. A few women work as servants in the towns and resorts. There is little use of the land for agricultural purposes, while hunting, fishing, and gathering still provide an important part of subsistence. Despite the often drastic conditions of acculturation during the past one hundred years, the Washo have maintained considerable homogeneity as an ethnic and cultural minority.

The Peyotists

Peyotism among the Washo is scarcely more than twenty years old, having been introduced by one Ben Lancaster, a member of the tribe who had learned the ritual and ideology during a long sojourn among eastern and southern tribes. In 1936 he started the proselyting which resulted in the creation of an enthusiastic group of Washo and Paiute adherents during the period 1936-39. By 1940, however, the movement had already become defunct, and meetings were no longer held in Washo territory. Ben Lancaster continued to preside over the embittered and secretive remnants of the cult, which consisted of a handful of loyal Paiute and a very few Washo members. He also erected an

is made in reference to the benefits paid by either Nevada or California. Unemployment compensation is paid by the respective states, as is compensation for injuries received on the job. The destitute receive assistance from state and county funds. Employment is sought in the same channels, public and private, as it is by white workers. The Washo drink in integrated cocktail lounges, gamble at integrated gaming tables and eat in integrated restaurants (although in all three instances certain establishments refuse to serve Indians). 177 648

The Washo tribe as a socio-political entity cannot be said to exist. A tribal council of members elected from the various Washo communities is largely ineffectual. Tribal consciousness, insofar as it exists, centers on the possibility of sharing in an eventual settlement of the Washo claim against the government. Several claims and suits in the name of the tribe actually have been instigated by individuals. Except for the 40-acre Dresslerville community, there is no tribal land. The pinenut allotments are owned individually, although the tribe holds a power of attorney to lease the land for grazing. This responsibility has in fact passed into the hands of the Indian agent at Stewart, Nevada, who receives and disburses the income from the leases. [623] [423]

There is no distinctly Washo economic occupational role, nor is there a separate Washo economic system. These statements should not be interpreted to mean that the Washo are enjoying all the benefits of modern white society without restriction or hindrance. The assimilation of the Washo by and large has been into the lowest and least privileged rung of the white social structure. Nor are the statements referring to social assimilation to be construed as an argument that the Washo have become totally acculturated. Although the Washo no longer exist as a compact social group, Washo culture, particularly in its less tangible aspects, has retained much of its viability, and the Washo form a clearly identifiable ethnic minority in western Nevada and eastern California.

Agriculture and Animal Husbandry

I did not discover a single family, indisputably Washo, that supported itself by raising livestock or growing crops, although a number of them live on holdings that would at least provide garden produce. One man near Woodfords does plant and care for about 2 acres of corn, but he is considered "half-Maidu" by his Washo neighbors. His grandfather had indeed married a Maidu bride and the family has been considered deviant since then. Although he identifies himself as a Washo, he tends to participate only minimally in tribal affairs, and is a member of an American Indian organization long since abandoned by other Washo. 241 563 [433]

It is perhaps significant to recall that the earliest Washo experience with livestock revealed a knowledge of the various techniques of using large animals, i.e., riding, driving and packing. The fact that these experimental techniques were used on an ox or cow rather than a horse is significant in understanding the processes involved in the diffusion of animal-use techniques (Downs, 1961c). With the exception that these techniques were finally transferred to the horse we can say that the Washo developed very little beyond skills displayed in the first instance. 177 231

Although I cannot presume to offer a complete explanation of this situation, it would perhaps be valuable to attempt to answer the question of why the Washo did not respond to the potential of animal husbandry.

As a basis we may refer to the hypothesis set forth elsewhere in this volume, that for ecological and historical reasons the Washo tended to be oriented to the west rather than east. The great barrier of the Sierra offers little encouragement to the use of horses or the keeping of herds.

There also appears to be reason to hypothesize that Washo culture itself holds some of the answers to this question. From the very earliest contact Washo response to the new alternatives presented by white culture and technology has been to make a minimal adjustment of aboriginal behavior. Thus the Washo in part continued their gathering, hunting and fishing cycle without permanent homesites until the 1920's, when the last nomadic band became sedentary. White settlements were obviously viewed as sources of food either through temporary wage labor, which utilized aboriginal skills such as brush clearing and weed picking, or through attenuated gathering behavior such as begging, scavenging or theft. The livestock introduced by white men was looked upon primarily as a source of meat. Even today the Washo tend to live in terms of aboriginal orientation toward subsistence, involving a highly mobile opportunism that exploits the short term income possibilities of the economic system of western America. In the 19th century this minimal adjustment produced real rewards for the Washo. As commercial hunters and fishermen, harvest hands, brush clearers, woodchoppers, ranch hands, casual prostitutes and kitchen workers, etc., the Washo accepted jobs that whites, who had come west to make fortunes in ranching or even greater fortunes in mining or lumbering, did not care to perform. However, with the gradual restriction of hunting and fishing and the shift from field agriculture to stock raising in western Nevada, the Washo found their skills no longer in demand, and they entered a period of economic depression which continues at the present time. 177 178 231 [361] [433] 177 464 433 231 178 [458]

Although the present social, economic and cultural condition of the Washo is vastly different from the condition of a century ago, it seems clear 177 178 231

14:Stewart E-5 (1936-1938)1944 NR13 Northern Paiute NR13
Washo NT20

his car was fruitlessly searched three times by the California border patrol. At least a dozen persons claim definite knowledge that Ben added marihuana to the cigarettes he gave in meetings. Lane Dixon (P,1), a graduate of the Nevada Reform School, who has served several short jail sentences and locally is known to be a congenital liar, was informer for the Federal officers. He assured me, also, that marihuana was used because he had smoked marihuana cigarettes and felt the same sensations others described experiencing from eating peyote.[a] The basis for this accusation is Ben's practice of mixing a "white powder" in prayer cigarettes and burning those cigarettes after meeting ("to destroy the evidence"). Ben put some in my prayer cigarette and afterward gave me a sample from his large supply. It was a type of sage leaf chopped fine.

Federal authorities also suspect that Spanish fly (cantharides) has at times been given to girls in peyote meetings. Since I could obtain no real evidence of any display of sexual excitement during or following meetings, and since Lane Dixon is the principal source for the story, I doubt the charge.

The desire for prestige, or the fear of losing it, motivates Washo and Paiute reactions toward peyotism. Members seemed to enjoy vicariously some of the honor and position of their leader. Ben talked with Commissioner Collier (November, 1937), he spoke before the Minden Rotary Club (October, 1937), he prepared an attractive peyote exhibit for the Carson Valley Day Fair.[b] On the other hand, Hank Pete, self-styled chief of the Washo, naturally protests against submission to the rules of the peyote ceremony and to the authority of Ben Lancaster, feeling it detracts from his own prestige. Another nonmember argues, "The President of the United States and the white people in this valley don't use peyote." Shamans probably fear the loss of both money and honor, and, therefore, in the main oppose peyote, notable exceptions being Joe Green, Tom Mitchell, and Sam Dick.

Arguments for and against peyotism have been based on economic grounds. Ben's insistence that contributions are free-will offerings seems to have attracted a few who consider a peyote meeting cheaper than, yet equal to, a shamanistic treatment for which a price, from $2.50 to $5.00 a night, is fixed and paid in advance. The willingness of peyotists to donate liberally probably results from their having been conditioned to paying their shamans well, a practice which still continues, especially among the Washo. Having given up liquor, several reiterate that in spite of traveling expenses and contributions they have more money than formerly for food, clothing, shelter. Don James epigrammatized: "A dime now goes as far as a dollar used to." Several peyotists have recently purchased automobiles. A few may imagine economic gain by picturing themselves replacing Ben Lancaster. However, in his meetings, Sam Dick, the most likely successor, hardly collects expenses. Perhaps some of the Indians wish to associate with the influential Jameses and Arnots, who might provide them with jobs.

Economic objections to peyote, such as that Ben gets too much money, that the Indians should use their money for better purposes, and so on, are mainly rationalizations because the Washo-Paiute are typically unconcerned about their fellow man's economic condition, even when, as often happens, their poorer kinfolk move in

[a] From Bromberg's (1939, 4-12) review of the reactions caused by marihuana, which are increased motor activity, mental confusion, talkativeness, increased desire for alcohol, and sexual excitement, it is clear that marihuana and peyote produce opposite effects. Also, see Lundquist, 1939, 2, for the Schurz missionary report of the use of marihuana with peyote by Nevada Indians at a "National Fellowship of Indian Workers." Rev. G. E. E. Lundquist, who visited Schurz in 1938, heard Lane Dixon confirm the story.

[b] Sam Dick spoke and had peyotists sing at the Fair in 1939 (personal communication from Miss Grace Dangberg of Minden).

14:Stewart E-5 (1936-1938)1944 NR13 Northern Paiute NR13
Washo NT20

with them. Nonetheless, 30 informants are averse to peyotism on grounds that Ben is "robbing the Indians."

A significant economic argument against peyotism is neglect of farms and cattle and lost employment because of excessive devotion to religion. In the first months of Ben's proselyting, from two to four meetings were often held on as many consecutive nights and fanaticism kept some away from their responsibilities.

Members say that shamans and gambling-house proprietors probably dislike the cult because it takes away some of their clientele.[a] Two who temporarily joined the peyote religion were known to be hypochondriacs, one a steady customer of shamans, the other a frequent inmate of the hospital. Gamblers would be expected to resist a religion which held all-night meetings on Saturday nights. Moreover, it is suggested that bootleggers instigated some antagonism.

Kinship, friendship, and the satisfaction derived from a sociable in-group were also important factors contributing to the spread and growth of peyotism.[b] Just as real or assumed blood relationship and friendship facilitated Ben's introduction of the cult, family ties were important in increasing and holding members. An examination of the list in Appendix IV shows that most active peyotists have kinsfolk in the cult. However, this list also shows enough close relatives of members to be apostates or actively opposed to void any generalization that kinship wholly determines participation. Although only a few designate the pleasure of singing and meeting together as a reason for attendance, the enthusiastic preparation of gourd rattles, fans, etc., and the almost nightly singing practices indicate that the desire for social contact helps to convert and hold the Indians to peyotism.[c]

The basis for arguments of both peyotists and nonpeyotists is unverified opinion, wishful thinking, conscious or unconscious distortion of facts. Because of one or two apparently miraculous recoveries members attribute to peyote the power to cure all illness. Desiring to get well or to have their friends or families healed, they are prepared to accept excuses for failures. Opponents, on the other hand, blame peyote for the few deaths which followed attendance at rituals, maintaining peyote is a poison and that all users meet untimely ends. Opponents insist that peyotism is not a religion at all, but a congregation of narcotic addicts disguising their true purpose in order to avoid legal interference. To the members, however, peyotism is a religion, and it is extremely difficult, when listening to their prayers, to doubt their complete sincerity. So the argument swings on each point. Each side has as much truth as the other. Through associations and chance, these people choose what to believe.

DISCUSSION OF DIFFUSION

Whenever the diffusion of native religions has been studied, two theories, singly or combined, have been used to explain the phenomenon. The first, the cultural compatibility theory, postulates that new institutions will be acceptable to a people

[a] Parsons' account (pp. 67–68, 118–119) of opposition to peyote at Taos shows similar motivation: "The practice of . . . the outstanding shaman of the town is interfered with by peyote doctoring. I surmise that it was not until Porfirio realized the danger of this competition that the active opposition to the cult developed."

[b] Kinship and friendship facilitated the diffusion of the 1870 Ghost Dance, as well as the peyote cult. Du Bois reports (p. 135) intertribal marriages precipitated the transmission of the 1870 Dance from Shasta to Karok, Yurok to Tolowa to Tututni. Friendship aided a California Shasta proselyting related Shasta and other tribes on the Siletz and Grand Ronde reservations in Oregon. La Barre reports (pp. 112, 116) that "marital ties have often . . . been the source of the spread of peyote"; the first Comanche user learned of peyote when he married an Apache woman; Rave's first converts were his Winnebago relatives; a Modoc in Oklahoma became a peyotist through marriage to a Quapaw.

[c] La Barre states (p. 59) that "the primary reason for Northern Cheyenne meetings is social."